that night Taff did not sleep enough to hurt him.

Another big job loomed up at Montrose, Colorado, on the night of September 23. From Montrose a narrow gage railroad extends to Gunnison, where the headgate to the great Gunnison tunnel, a reclamation project, was opened by the President. The correspondents returned to Montrose and hammered out on typewriters or wrote by hand a total of twenty thousand words describing the project and what the President had done and said. Ordinarily, this office is run by a woman operator; but the vigilant Taff had called in a corps of expert operators from Denver and had made use of the railroad wires in addition to regular commercial lines, so that the stories got out in good order.

At North Yakima, Washington, where practically no file at all was expected, more than fifteen thousand words was produced by the President's meeting an old sweetheart. This was one of the times when Taff had to throw off his coat, loosen his collar, roll up his sleeves, and get down to the telegraph instrument himself.

Difficulties in Yosemite

BUT it was in the Yosemite National Park, California, that this man, who had been dragging a telegraph wire after the President day and night, was confronted with a real difficulty. From the evening of October 6 until the morning of October 10, the presidential party was coaching in the park, covering more than one hundred miles and changing base every night.

"This," sighed the correspondents, "is where the great blow-off hits us. We might as well be buried. No chance to get anything out of this place."

They noted some telephone wires running through the park; but Taff had known of them before their arrival. He called in Electrical Engineer Hooper, of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company, and a corps of assistants, and converted those telephone wires into "composite circuits," so that they could be used for telegraphing as well as telephoning. The result was that full fledged, though temporary, telegraph offices were set up at night at the three stopping places of the party in the park, El Portal, Wawona, and Sentinel, and from these almost magically constructed offices more than twenty-five thousand words were sent to the outer world.

But this was not all of the woe that struck Taff amid the beauties and wonders of the park. The night of October 8 the President decided to stop at Glacier Point, so that from the top of the cañon he might see the sunrise. The telegraph line terminates at Sentinel, which is four miles from Glacier Point by the short trail, and there is only one telephone wire, a military line, between the two places.

When the correspondents took in the situation, they began to pay their customary tributes to the operators, directors, officials, and stockholders of the telegraph companies of the world in general and this country in particular.

"Well," remarked Taff urbanely, "if you gentlemen will have your despatches written early in the morning, they will be put on the wire."

The next morning, before dawn, a relay of messengers appeared at Glacier Point, and one after another they took the copy as it was written and hurried down the mountainside along the short trail to Sentinel, where Taff had special operators waiting to transmit the matter. Before the party had descended the mountain, most of the despatches were in the offices of Eastern newspapers for the "early afternoons."

In the Yosemite during Mr. Taft's stay a corps of seven telegraph and telephone electricians and telegraphers was always on the job, arranging wires or sending messages. There was always a detachment of these men ahead of the President; so that when he made a stop everything was in readiness for the telegraph work. In addition to this, the wires in the park were constantly patrolled and guarded by linemen, mounted and equipped in cowboy fashion, in order to prevent any interruption of the service or to make quick repairs when needed.

"Taff's messengers" came to be well known long before the Pacific Coast had been left behind. He always had the uniformed youngsters on the platform awaiting the train. At a small town in Texas, where the train made a stop of two minutes, a bright little boy went over the brass rail of the President's observation platform and found Mr. Taft sitting there.

"Well, young man," asked the President, "have you a despatch for me?"

"No, sir," replied the boy, quick as a shot. "Have you got one for me?"

Taff got a rest during the few quiet days Taft spent at his brother's ranch at Gregory, Texas; but after that the old round of waiting up half the night for trains and riding in baggage cars began all over again.

The Mississippi Maze

THEN came the supreme problem of the trip when the start was made down the Mississippi from St. Louis under the auspices of the Lakes-to-the-Gulf Deep Waterways Association. The trip began October 25, and it consisted of a vast amount of confusion, running behind schedules, and stops made on both banks of the river. Taff had to attend to both banks. On each side of the river he had extra operators and electricians at every possible stop. These moved along down the stream, keeping up with the procession. Taff was like a man demented and possessed of the speed mania. He crossed and recrossed the river. He put out at all hours from either one bank or the other to the moving boats. Then the schedule went wrong from the very first day of the voyage. Many of the steamers could not travel so fast in the water as they had been able to do on paper under the skilful but inaccurate figuring of the committee on arrangements.

No stop was made on time, and it was frequently the case that the correspondents got into port just in time to file their despatches. Things got worse than that, and Taff saw that every moment possible must be saved. That was when he went into the rowboat and steam launch business in earnest. He got boats where nobody else had been able to find them. He would conjure up craft from hidden places, take a long running jump and land on his feet in them, getting a good start toward the approaching fleet.

But the question was, How was he to get hold of the despatches after he had come within hailing distance of the boats?

He did not mind having to cross and recross the river. His rides by day and night in railroad trains, beating out the fleet, and often retracing part of the way in buggies, did not bother him; but he could not exactly see the advantage of going so close to a big river steamer in a rowboat or a small launch that the wash from the steamer would capsize his craft.

Bottles and Pails as Messengers

THERE was where he had his famous bottle inspiration. At one of the stops he passed the word to all boats that at Greenville, Mississippi, he would be standing by in a launch and that messages and despatches could be thrown to him in sealed bottles which he had had placed on the boats. When, in the forenoon, the fleet was opposite Greenville, a steam launch covered from water line up with huge Western Union placards put out from shore, and in it stood Taff bellowing for dear life something like this:

"Throw over the bottles! I can send them to any part of the world in an hour! The Western Union's on the job!"

As the steamers went by, there were thrown into the water from each of them several of the sealed bottles containing newspaper stories and personal and official messages. Taff had his launch running round in circles; but he didn't overlook a bottle. The President stood on deck and watched him fish up the jar containing despatches to members of the Cabinet in Washington.

In one of these bottles was a despatch to a New York newspaper dated "Steamboat Oleander, by bottle thrown overboard." The paper later in the day queried Taff as to the accuracy of this statement, explaining the impossibility of believing that the man who wrote it had ever thrown a bottle overboard.

Taff's laconic reply was, "Bottle correct. Thrown overboard because empty."

On the following day, October 29, no stop was scheduled in a period of twelve hours, and, to make things worse, it was evident that the fleet, still running persistently behind time, would not reach Baton Rouge, Louisiana, until too late for correspondents of morning papers to get their copy off. Taff thereupon decided that the stuff must be filed from a point higher up the river, Bayou Sara, Louisiana. It was dark when Bayou Sara was reached, and it would have been well nigh impossible for him to have found glass bottles in the brown waters of the river after nightfall. He had had the foresight to deal with this, and had put a big shiny tin pail on each of the steamers, leaving instruc-

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A BIZARRE NOCTURNE

By L. J. Beeston

Drawing by Armand Both

ON the table in the center of the room—the long table of black oak, hard as iron and almost as heavy, and so highly polished that its uncovered surface reflected the candles' light like a mirror—lay the Captain of Hussars, dead.

The candles were at his head and feet. Their feeble gleam barely reached the corners of the immense dining room. The tapering flames were reflected as points of light in the long framed looking glasses that adorned the paneled walls, extending from oak floor to carved ceiling black with smoke. Between these great mirrors were portraits in oil, figures of men and women in attire that went back five hundred years. The robe of a Cardinal flared dull red in the nebulous light; the armor of a warrior gleamed fearsomely.

The Captain of Hussars was stretched out stiffly on his hard couch, and his sightless eyeballs stared up at the grimy ceiling in a fixed and terrible frown.

The tenants of the château had quitted it in a great hurry, which, after all, had not been justified. The report that the German advance guard, after the defeat of Marshal MacMahon, was turning that way, had no truth in it; but the mistress of the château fled with her children.

Midnight was not far away. The poplar trees east of the house were roaring in the wind, a wind that had the chill of death, which whistled over the frozen meadows, through the leafless hedges, and turned to iron the standing pools of the flat country. The disk of the full moon had climbed above the low lying mists, and its purified orb glowed as white flame. It sent a slanting beam through one of the tall windows of the dining room, and illumined a splendid fireplace of white marble.

The fingers of the Hussar Captain clenched the hilt of his saber, which his comrades had placed on his breast. The cry of the night wind did not pierce his dulled ears. A solitary shout of laughter sounded in an adjoining room. It was hushed instantly and followed by a murmur of voices. The shaft of moonlight wheeled slowly, deserting the great fireplace, with its open hearth made for huge logs of wood, and now it shone upon a glass cabinet filled with old ivory.

The candles burned lower and lower. Imagine their tiny spires of flame in the eyes of the man upon the table! His tall, lean figure was not clad in the full glory of a Hussar uniform. The last shred of his tunic had dropped from him as he and his comrades scrambled through a frozen thicket, five days after Sedan, with thirty Uhlans at their heels. His breast was covered with ragged remnants of a peasant's blouse which he had picked up somewhere or other. Two fragments of a potato sack were tied round his legs. He had on his left foot the yellow kneeboot of a Spahi whom he had found in a ditch sleeping an everlasting slumber. The other foot was bare. His stern face, scarred and sunken, showed in its repose the spirit that had tenanted it. Heaven knows how many lives of Prussians this man had taken.

Suddenly there was another laugh, and this time it was not hushed. A glass smashed. Then a high, wavering voice began to sing an air that had taken Paris by storm before the war broke. It was loudly applauded. There came the sound of a champagne cork leaping from a bottle. The odor of cigars stole into the dining room.

The candles burned very low. In a few minutes they must expire. The untrimmed wicks flared smokily.

At that moment a human face appeared outside the window through which the pallid moonsheen drifted. It was a fair face, with a golden beard and blue eyed, and was surmounted by a spiked helmet. The eyes of this countenance became fixed upon the figure of the Captain of Hussars, upon the guttering candles dropping grease.

That face of a German dragoon vanished as swiftly as it had come.

One by one the candles gave up their brief lives. Only the pale moonlight suffused the long room.

THE six French soldiers in the next room were in the condition of men who have been starving for three days and perishing with cold, and abruptly find plenty, with good wine to wash it down, and an enormous fire to draw the frost out of their bones.

That is to say, the Frenchmen were not quite clear in their heads; but wholly comfortable in their stomachs, with their past sufferings quite vanished from their minds, and body and soul given up to a most delightful ease, a perfect content in a delicious present. In the corner of the room, by the door, six chassepots were stacked.

"Poor Baudemont! We shall have to look long to find a better fellow in the army. He detested a German as much as he loved a pretty woman; and that is the whole duty of man—of a Frenchman, at any rate. Baudemont, good speed to your soul!"

All drank the health proposed by Compardin, who had been a vinegrower before the campaign.

"Name of a dog! if the army had had a thousand such Prussian eaters, we should be looking for pretty girls in Berlin by now!" cried Guillard, a Corporal.

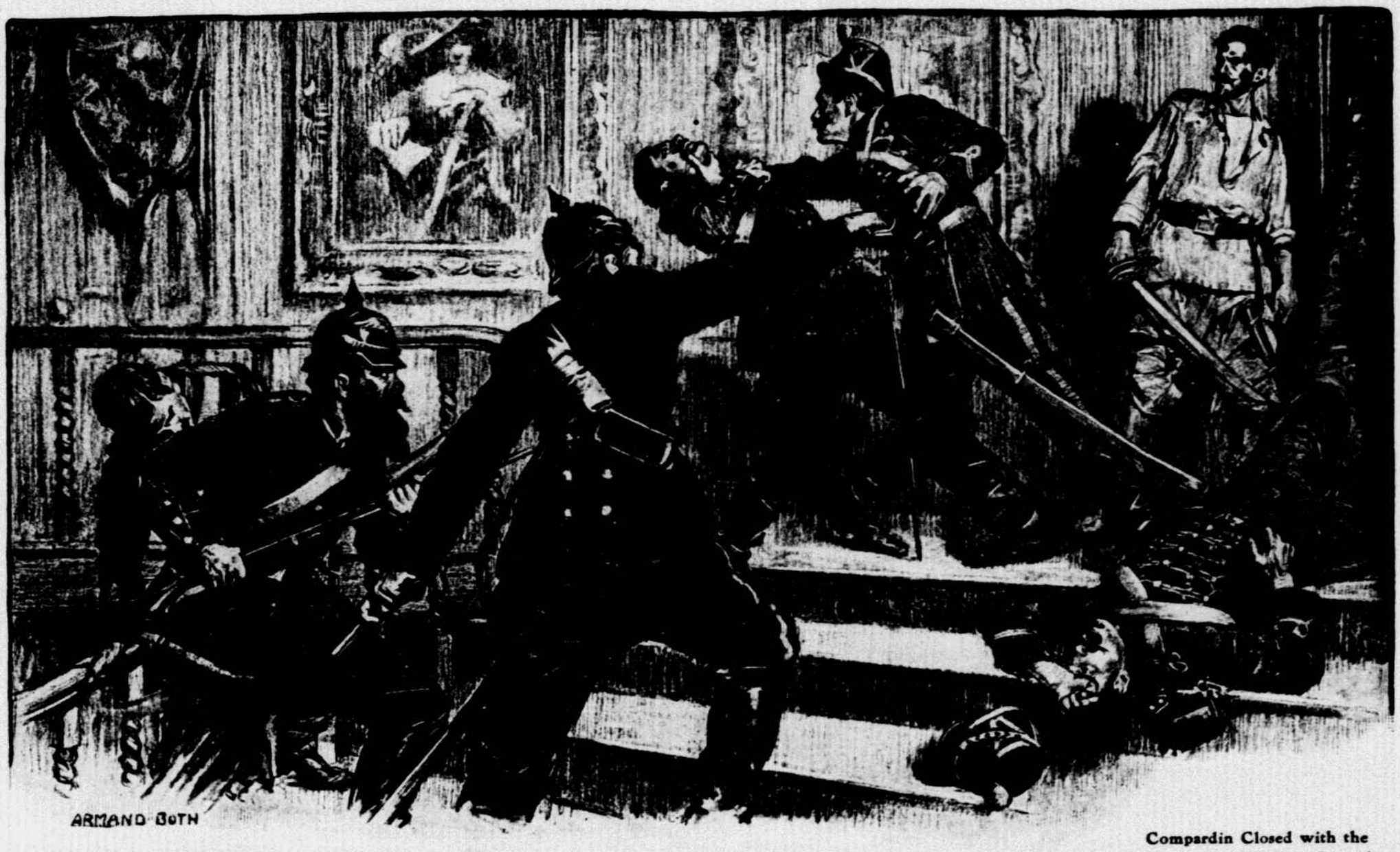
"A hundred!" protested Rosselin, an artist, holding his glass of golden wine before one of the candle sconces.

"Rest easy, my friends. I will give him a place in my next novel, where he will live forever," grunted Raphael de Cheret.

"Shall we ever forget how he fought the blues on the roof of the inn at La Rivet?" demanded Marette the shopkeeper. "When the war began I did not care about leaving my silks and cottons; but—deuce take it all!—to have known such a man is—is to have lived!" and Marette swore in a fashion unknown to him when behind his counter.

"At dawn we will bury him," summed up Varache, a musician. "I do not know how you feel, my friends; but with our Captain gone I feel—I feel—" his head drooped forward sleepily, and no one ever knew the precise state of his sentiments.

"At any rate, he chose the dramatic moment to die," cried the author. "When was it, three hours ago? It seems like three eternities. How long had we been hiding in that accursed quarry? Never mind. We need not trouble our brains with questions now. But we



Compardin Closed with the German in His Last Struggle.

wanted to sleep there, didn't we? We were done up. There was no warmth in our frozen veins, and our joints were like dead wood. 'Courage, children!' cried Baudemont. 'I have an idea that help is near. I smell it with my instinct.' And when he clambered out of the quarry we followed. And sure enough we came to this château an hour later. 'See!' cried out poor Baudemont, pointing with his saber. 'There is what I promised you.' And with the words he fell on the snow, a dead man. If you ask me, I believe he was inspired. *Hélas!* how he always cut out the work for the Germans!"

"I found this in a bag sewed to his shirt, over his brave heart," said Compardin, and he held up a miniature, the painted portrait of a slim girl with smiling eyes. "I will not rest until I find who owns this sweet face, that I may tell her how Baudemont carved the Prussians."

"Messieurs!" Varache sprang to his feet suddenly. "A health to Count Raoul de Baudemont, who—"

TAP—tap—tap! It was a summoning knock upon one of the two doors of the room, the one that opened on a corridor. Every startled eye was directed to the half-dozen chassepots; but before a man could move the door was flung back and a Prussian officer with blue eyes and a golden beard stepped across the threshold, instantly folded his arms across his broad chest, and surveyed the company with a smile.

If the German had covered his foes with a couple of army pistols they would have been at his throat like wolves; but this smile, which lighted up his handsome face as a ray of sunshine, was more irresistible than an unmasked battery. Everyone stared at him, open mouthed.

"I yield myself your prisoner, Messieurs," said he in very bad French, "if you choose to take me; but I hope you will do nothing of the kind. I am alone in this château and without arms. If you will permit me to say so, you keep a bad guard. There is a copse of pine trees within pistol shot, where I have twelve companions half dead with the cold, who—"

Every Frenchman leaped to his feet and rushed for his weapon.

"The door, Marette!" shouted Varache, and the shopkeeper sprang in front of it, the point of his bayonet threatening the Prussian's spine.

The charming smile, which had relaxed when the officer spoke, now returned to his face. "Listen to me, Messieurs, and shoot me afterward if you will. My comrades and I are a detachment of scouts who have lost our way. I admit it because, in the first place, it is the truth and I wish to be frank with you; and in the second place, if you kill me, as you have a perfect right to do, I am afraid my friends in the pine copse will come here and search for me."

"So much the better," snarled Varache, showing his teeth.

"But allow me to point out that my appearance here is evidence enough that I could have brought my friends with me. I do not say that we should have beaten you, for you are brave, like all Frenchmen; but we should certainly have disturbed your dinner."

The musician bowed at the compliment. Then he answered, "All this is very pretty, especially for a German; but permit me in my turn to remark that I fail to see what you are driving at."

"That is easily explained. It is Epiphany. It has brought you luck in the form of a good meal and good shelter. Must we on this day kill one another in order that the one or two left may have more than is good for them? Do you not agree with me that that would be a pity? But food and sleep we must have, and will have. It is so cold outside that small birds are dropping, frozen, on the highways. I propose a truce, gentlemen. If there is enough for all, let us share it, and part on the morrow."

Varache frowned, tugged at his mustaches, and looked at his men, who had instinctively constituted him their leader. In spite of himself, he felt drawn toward this blue eyed Prussian with his smile of a light hearted boy. He said, "What do you advise, de Cheret?"

"My stomach is well lined just now, and a possible gunshot inside it would spoil digestion," replied de Cheret.

"And you, Rosselin?"

"As he says, it is the Epiphany," answered the artist.

"And you, Compardin?"

"A thousand times no!" rapped out the vinegrower. "What, have we already forgotten Baudemont? Would he, though dying, have sat down with Germans? Shall we insult his memory? Or is it that we are six to thirteen that makes us hesitate?"

"Silence!" said Varache sternly.

Guillard the Corporal and Marette the shopkeeper were not asked for their advice.

"You will understand, Messieurs, that I am asking no favors for my famishing wolves in the pine copse," said the Prussian tranquilly; "but if it came to fighting there would be a lot of good food wasted and warm beds unslept in. Then, as I say, it is the Epiphany, and if we remember our Savior's star," the speaker crossed himself, "it will make us none the worse. Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Count von Eyrick. We are neither of us overdressed, it seems; but a gentleman knows another."

Varache again bowed. "Well, Count, it shall be as you suggest," he answered. "Welcome—on the Epiphany!"

Compardin cursed under his breath.

"Send one of your men with your invitation, Monsieur, for which I beg to offer you my sincere thanks," said the German.

"You are at liberty to go yourself, Count," smiled Varache.

"Monsieur, your trust, for which I am grateful, does you honor; but it is not necessary that I go out." The Prussian moved to the window, which he flung open, and, making a trumpet of his hands, he roared a command to his troopers in the pine copse.

COMPARDIN could not keep still. He kept getting up and walking about the room in spite of his chief's frowns, and glared at the thirteen Prussians as if he would have liked to fall upon them. The real truth was that the champagne and brandy liqueur, which had softened all other hearts, subdued animosities, and made friends of deadly enemies, had worked an opposite effect in Compardin, who became more and more morose. And when he thought of the Hussar Captain in the silent room his haggard eyes kept filling with tears, tears of rage and hate.

The thirteen new guests were troopers, with a long blue cloak apiece, and their general appearance by comparison made the six Frenchmen look like scarecrows.

Varache had already related seven times the full story of his Captain's dramatic death and how they had laid him out on the table in the dining room.

"Well, he is not the only one," sighed a Prussian who wore a Quartermaster's stripes. "After all, it doesn't matter much to us what happens. They are those we leave behind who suffer." And as he spoke some memory of a dear face and voice must have come vividly to him; for his features twitched and he glared ferociously at the ceiling.

"I thank God I have no one to weep for me!" laughed the author.

"And I thank heaven I have!" replied von Eyrick, removing his cigar and stretching his long legs under the table. "Between you and me, my friends, I think this campaign has made wild animals of us. It is only remembrance of those who wait and pray that keeps a soft spot in our hearts at all."

"That is very true, Count," said Rosselin sadly. "On the other hand, if we cultivated such recollections, we should be better poets than patriots, better saints than soldiers. Do you know La Bouille, by the forest of Roumare? There is a girl, a woodman's daughter, who came out of the Golden Legend. Her eyes are morning; her hair is sunshine; her voice the running water; her soul the skies. Now I will tell you a great secret, my friends, which I hope you will keep to yourselves. It is this: when I am tired of Paris, and mean seriously to renew my youth—"

"And the woman who waits for Baudemont, what of her?" interrupted Compardin with gloomy savageness. "If none of you will avenge—"

"Enough, good Compardin," interposed Varache with a graceful wave of his hand. "Sit. You will tire yourself out. Listen to me, Messieurs. You imagine that you are all in love. I do not blame you. Yet if you saw my little Baroness who lives in the corner house in Rue— *Peste!* I nearly let the secret out. I am a musician. When others speak of love, I touch it in impassioned chords." He rose, none too steadily, and went to a piano at one end of the drawing room. And after running up and down a minor scale two or three times he began to play with intense pathos.

Compardin stopped in his walk and stared out of the window, at the broad deluge of moonlight on the meadows, at the heavy snow which seemed to deepen the silence as if in falling it had exhausted the skies of strength. Rosselin hummed the melody in the composition. Two or three of the Prussians either dropped asleep, or else sat with closed eyes listening to the

player. The German Count, who was profoundly moved, for the first time since he had received his marching orders, which came a week after his marriage, allowed himself, while the melody lasted, to call from memory white arms that caressed, brown eyes swollen with weeping, and that voice which he had heard ever since he rode his regiment over the frontier.

"Promise me that if you are killed you will come to me, if it be possible, once—just once, before you take your eternal departure."

He remembered that he had smiled at the request; then the earnest light of faith in his young wife's eyes had chased away his laugh. And he had promised. "Yes, yes, of course. That is, if the dead can return. But there, who talks of dying?"

"That is a song without words for my little Baroness," called out Varache. "I have loved seventeen different women, and each I have immortalized in a nocturne. I chose that form of composition because there is more of sadness in love than delight. Now—"

HARK!" It was Compardin who spoke, wheeling about with uplifted hand. In a moment everybody was fully awake.

"Why in the name of the fiends did you interrupt?" cried the musician angrily, after a silence. "I—I heard a sound in—that room!" Compardin pointed with his finger toward the dining room.

"Idiot!" growled Varache, and his right hand was just about to strike a chord when it became paralyzed as he distinctly heard a sound in the adjoining apartment as if a chair was being pushed along the floor.

"God deliver us!" exclaimed the artist, and the color rushed out of his face.

The German Count flashed a look at Varache, and he signed to his men to keep still.

"No treachery, on my honor," said the musician in a husky tone, "unless the dead betray."

The handle of the door rattled.

Compardin began to growl softly, like a dog.

The author looked at the white faces, the staring eyeballs, and at the door, which was now slowly moving inward. He had the eye for a dramatic situation. "Baudemont has but to show himself—" he muttered.

HE had scarcely spoken when there appeared upon the threshold a frightful apparition. It was Count de Baudemont, with bloodless face. He stood swaying there from side to side, in the ragged remains of his peasant's blouse, and the potato sacks round his lean legs, and the yellow kneeboot upon one foot, and the other bare. And his face of death, with its unkempt hair and a month's growth of beard, was lighted up by his eyes, which burned with a wild, strange flame as he turned them from one member of the company to another.

Compardin uttered a terrible cry and fell across the table, smashing glasses and plates and sending one of the candle sconces rolling.

"*Gott in Himmel!*" murmured the German lancer, who felt the hair stir upon his head.

Varache, who was sitting on a music stool, put out a hand to steady himself, and his groping fingers struck a jangling chord in the bass notes.

The rest of the company, Frenchmen and Prussians, were for the moment incapable of movement, save the author, who managed to get upon his feet and to take a couple of steps toward the apparition. He called out in a husky voice:

"Captain, is it you?"

The Hussar clutched the jamb to steady himself. He looked at the Germans with his burning eyes; then he looked at de Cheret and tried to speak. With a cry of joy the author leaped forward and flung his arms round the Captain, who sank forward into them.

"*Mon Dieu*, comrades! He is as much alive as we are!" shouted de Cheret in a voice of triumph.

Everyone crowded round. The Captain was laid on a

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A REVISE ON RUTTY BOY

By Sewell Ford

Drawings by F. Vaux Wilson

Rutledge. He Goes Through the Act Real Well for an Amateur.

SAY, ain't it something scandalous how far from Broadway one of these summer schedule expresses will take you in a few hours? Honest, when I think how deep into the baked bean belt I've been for the last few days, I wonder if it's really so that I'm back already.

Course, I knew it didn't take Sadie so long to get there when little Sully has that kick-up with his tummy and she lights out with him for Bar Harbor; but names of places don't mean much to me unless I've been to 'em. So, when she suggests that I follow along about Friday night and put in a day or so up there myself, I says offhand that maybe I will.

And it seems so dead easy to jump from 42d-st. into the State of Maine when you do it scientific! Why, I strolls aboard the sleeper here about eight P. M., climbs into my upper bunk along about Bridgeport, and next mornin' when I pokes my head through the curtains to interview Mr. Jack Johnson's seventh cousin as to where we were at, he says we'll be in the Portland station inside of half an hour. Which leaves me only time to go through the acrobatic stunt of gettin' into my pants without crackin' my nut on the ceilin', callin' for the front steps, and makin' a dive for the washroom before the towels gave out.

I'D rinsed off one or two layers of coal cinders and was bracin' myself out in the vestibule where there was more room to button my collar, when who should I see steppin' in from the rear car but my little old friend the Bishop, that I ain't run across before in months. He's got his vest hooked up wrong, and his hair is mussed, and them humorous old eyes of his is lackin' most of their twinkle.

"Say, Bishop," says I, "don't tell me they had the nerve to stow you away in an upper."

"Why, Shorty!" says he. "Where in the world—"

"What I want to know," I goes on, "is how could you do it, specially with that pod of yours?"

"I didn't," says he. "Certainly not! I had a stateroom all to myself."

"Gee!" says I. "I thought them private boudoirs was only for woolen trust Senators and millionaire brewers. That must have been the way Sadie did it, too. She's up the coast with the youngster, which accounts for me bein' so far off my reg'lar beat. But I thought you always hung out around Newport during the season. Takin' a little plea ure trip, eh?"

"Far from it, Shorty," says the Bishop, allowin' the worry wrinkles to gather around his eye corners. "In fact, I am on a most painful errand."

"Ain't lost any of your rich pew holders, have you?" says I.

"It's a family matter," says he. "Perhaps you remember my younger sister, Mrs. Ashcroft?"

"The widow?" says I. "Sure! She ain't—"

"This concerns her son Rutledge," says the Bishop. "He has run away."

"Up in this direction?" says I. "Well, considerin' the weather we've had lately, he knew which way to head, didn't he?"

The Bishop steadies himself against the big brass brake handle and shakes his head solemn. "I fear Rutledge has gone wrong, hopelessly wrong," says he. "It is very hard on my sister. He is her only child, you know. And to think that he should turn out to be such a thorough scamp!"

"Ain't set fire to anything, or pinched the fam'ly jewels, has he?" says I.

NO, it wa'n't quite so bad as that. He leads me into the smokin' compartment, and while we're still bowlin' along past the potato orchards and sawmills and cow pastures that bound Portland on the southwest, he gives me an outline of the bloodcurdlin' career of Rutledge the Rascal.

Seems he wa'n't but nineteen, either, this sin soaked nephew of the Bishop's. And they'd always thought, up to a few weeks ago, that he was such a nice boy. Why, his mother had doped it all out how he was to follow in Uncle's line, and in a few years be a full blown curate, with a standin' collar to his frock coat and a white choker buttoned behind. His good record at the church boardin' school had led her to bank on that much.

It was only after he got to be a freshman at college that there'd been any hint that Rutledge wa'n't a saint in the bud. For one thing, he developed into a cigarette fiend, and for another his folks begun to get letters from the faculty suggestin' that Rutledge wasn't exactly killin' himself with study. Someway he managed to squeeze through the term, though, and he'd come home in June betrayin' no worse habits than a tendency for eleven o'clock breakfasts and a yearnin' for sportin' extras that was amazin'.

Just by accident it was, too, that the awful truth about how he'd been actin' at college came out. A young lady cousin of Rutledge's had heard the whole horrid story from a young lady friend of hers who had met Rutledge several times during the winter. And of course the cousin promptly told Mother all about it.

"Dissipation, gambling, and worse!" groans the Bishop.

"Wow!" says I. "You don't mean a kid like that got to hittin' up the blended stuff?"

"We are informed," says the Bishop, "that after one of the big footballs game he indulged in a wild orgie which lasted for a whole week."

"Well, well!" says I. "That was a good long souse for a beginner. And how was it he dropped his coin, poker or the ponies?"

"Beg pardon?" says the Bishop.

"What was he plungin' on in this gamblin' act you mentioned?" says I.

"Oh!" says the Bishop. "Roulette, I believe they said. Something in which there is a wheel and—"

"That's the game," says I; "but how about the rest? Didn't you say there was worse yet?"

"An actress!" says the Bishop, shudderin'.

"You don't say!" says I. "He wa'n't omittin' any gay life details, was he? No wonder he didn't have much time left for study! Him only nineteen! Say, Bishop, you sure have got some sportin' blood in the fam'ly at last. He must be a wonder, this Rutledge boy. And now you say he's cut loose once more, eh?"

THAT was what. Seems that after all the hideous revelations was out there'd been a fam'ly council called, and without puttin' Rutledge on the stand at all they'd decided to maroon him for the summer in the old Ashcroft place up on the Sound, with two hired tutors from a divinity school to keep him pluggin' at his books and put him through a course of moral sprouts, while Mother and Uncle enjoyed themselves at Newport.

Rutledge had stood for three or four weeks of this, and then one mornin' it appears that a couple of young college chums of his had shown up off the Ashcroft dock in a thirty-five-foot knockabout in answer to a letter of distress. Next thing the tutors knew Rutledge was wavin' 'em goodby with his fingers to his nose, and they'd lost their job. The name of the yacht was the only clue; but Mrs. Ashcroft pays for special ship news bulletins and manages to keep track of the Wawanda as far up as Portsmouth. From there the trail was lost, until the Bishop happens to run across an item saying how this actress party has a cottage up on the Maine Coast, and from that they guesses where he'd be likely to land next. So the Bishop and Mother takes a train north to head him off.

"And it is such good fortune to meet you, Shorty!" says the Bishop. "I—I have been dreading this first interview with Rutledge; but you will know exactly how to go about it."

"Eh?" says I. "Me?"

"Surely you will help us, won't you?" says the Bishop. "His mother, you know, is too unnerved for the task, and I hardly know what to say to him. But you will. And we must save him, indeed we must! You were sent by Providence to help us."

"Never touched Providence at all," says I. "This train comes up by way of Hartford. And I'm no youth reformer, anyway. What good would I do?"

THE Bishop hangs on, though, until fin'lly I gives in and says I'll see what can be done. First off I wants to know about the actress, what's her name, and so on.

"Her name was printed on a photograph we found in Rutledge's room," says he. "It was Allair; Elsie Allair, I think."

"What!" says I. "Say, but he is a high rollin' chappy! Why, I know her. She was a neighbor of ours

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Taft and Taff

Continued from page 4

tions that the despatches were to be placed in them and their tops tied down tightly with rope.

These directions were followed, and Taff was on hand in another launch, with a small fleet of rowboats following him. His launch was brilliantly illuminated with electric lights, and, as each steamer passed, he called for the tin pail to be cast overboard. By the use of a powerful searchlight he located each pail and, through a megaphone, told his helpers in the rowboats the location of it. The rowboats brought him a total of a dozen pails, and he steamed back to shore and put the despatches on the wire.

When anybody mentions the Mississippi River to Taff now, he shudders. The file of press and official matter on the voyage was heavier than during any other part of the President's trip. This was due to the fact that Mr. Taft was accompanied by many Senators and Representatives, and their speeches had to be reported by the correspondents. Another thing that augmented the file was that every newspaper of any importance in the Mississippi Valley had a special representative on one of the steamers.

Over a Million Words Sent

HERE are the amounts filed at some of the stopping places and "bottle stations" on the way:

At Hickman, Kentucky, 37,000 words; at Helena, Arkansas, 32,000; Greenville, Mississippi, by bottle, 10,000; at Bayou Sara, Louisiana, by pail, 19,000; at Vicksburg, Mississippi, 27,000; and at New Orleans, 50,000.

Official returns from the company state that it handled more than one million words during the entire swing round the country; but the rates at which press despatches are handled and the heavy expenses entailed by Taff's weird appearances whenever wanted and unexpected jumps from point to point, probably cut down the earnings of the offices in a large measure.

When the newspaper correspondents who made the circuit with the President meet one another on the street in Washington now and some one asks, "Where's Taff?" there is a laugh, and the minds of all of them go back to those fifty-five days and nights when Taff performed stunts in traveling and locomotion and management that were marvelous to behold. He had been successful in keeping in touch with Mr. Taft and his party every day and night. He had kept up with the party when it had been running as a special train, and he had had to get along on ordinary and local trains. He had been with them by land and on the water, and he had not fallen down once on his job of having every telegraph office the party struck ready for the immediate sending of immense volumes of matter.

He spent a lot of money for his company, and he earned a lot for it. He lost that twenty pounds referred to, and his smile had had a weary twist to it on some occasions; but he got in one great, broad grin on the run from Richmond, Virginia, into Washington, the very last stage of the journey.

It was then that the President sent a messenger into one of the day coaches to tell Taff to approach the presence of Taft.

Taff approached.

"Mr. Taff," said the President, with a smile that was not weary,—for the President never wearies of traveling,—"I want to tell you how much I have appreciated the convenience and comfort you have given me by always keeping my party and me in perfect touch through the telegraph with the outside world, no matter where we were. I thank you."

A Bizarre Nocturne

Continued from page 6

sofa, and he swallowed eagerly the champagne offered to him. The blood crept by degrees into the pale furrows of his sunken cheeks. He sat up without assistance.

"And who said I was not alive?" he growled. "You pack of fools! What! Are you tired of me? Yes, yes, I see you that must be. *Tonnerre!* You sit down with Prussians, eh? I—I am ashamed of you, my children!" His voice became very faint and his head drooped forward.

"Do not be ashamed of me, my Captain!" cried Compardin, who had speedily recovered and was chafing Baudemont's hands. "Ah, how cold they feel!" he kept muttering. And tears ran down his cheeks.

THE German Count spoke for the first time. "I suggest that it was a cataleptic fit," said he. "Such a condition of coma, brought on by cold and want of food, would simulate death." He took the Captain's hand to feel his pulse.

"Some more wine?" asked Baudemont.

"No; some food first, Monsieur," begged the Prussian.

"Compardin, some wine!" insisted the other.

And Compardin hastened to obey.

The Hussar took the glass and flung it in the face of the Prussian. "Take that to the devil to cool yourself with!" he snarled and struggled to his feet.

"Bravo! You hear that, German?" shouted Compardin.

Von Eyrick went rather white. He shrugged his shoulders. His men, alert as wolves, fixed their eyes upon him. Perfectly trained, they did not move an inch.

The musician interposed. "My Captain, these are, in a fashion, my guests," he said.

"Ah! I am your Captain still?" answered Baudemont, his face now darkly flushed as the wine fumes rose to his brain and gave him unnatural strength. "Well, I'll have no German dogs here, that is all!" He glared at the Count with haggard eyes. "You hear me?" he almost shouted. "I do not want you! Will you go—or shall I make you?"

The blue coated troopers were immovable as marble.

Von Eyrick glanced at Varache. "This polite Captain of yours, he speaks with authority?" he demanded haughtily.

The musician inclined his head. "That is certain," said he.

"Very well. I beg to inform you that I have no intention of sleeping my men tonight anywhere save inside this château."

"Ah, ah!" sighed the musician.

"In these circumstances I must regretfully point out to you that we are the superior force."

"Bah! I do not acknowledge that," retorted Varache, and he glanced at his refreshed Hussars, who were like mastiffs that strain at a leash. One word, one ill advised hasty word, and the room would become a shambles. "Look here!" continued Varache. "I admitted you and your men, Monsieur, on a peaceful understanding. If it had been anything else, we should have fought you."

The Prussian nodded. "So then—"

"Name of a dog! Have I no voice in the matter?" cried Baudemont hoarsely.

"Shall we fall upon them, my Captain?" whispered Compardin; but the author gripped him by the arm.

"Silence, fool!" he hissed.

"So, then," continued von Eyrick calmly, addressing Varache, "it seems that we are bound, in some sort, to take no advantage of a friendly admittance. I shall therefore beg leave to retire as we came."

"That is well said, Monsieur," replied Varache with a low bow.

"The consequences be upon your own heads!" added the Prussian in a voice of iron.

"Precisely," agreed the musician.

The Germans filed out from the château.

THEY are gone?" said Count de Baudemont, rolling his heated eyes.

"And they will soon be back. We await your orders," said Varache. "What a pity our little concert was interrupted!"

"De Cheret, take Marette and watch the back of the house," said Baudemont, tearing with his teeth the leg of a cold fowl. "Report if the enemy show themselves."

"They will not do that," said the musician as the others went out; "for they are marching single file up the straight drive, where you can see them from this window. Ah, they have scattered! I think the fun is going to begin. I will say this for that Prussian: that throughout the war I have not met—"

A faint cloud of smoke puffed into the moonlight; a needle gun rang sharply; a ball drilled a neat hole through one of the panes and smashed a bottle of brandy on the table.

"Better wine than that is going to run," soliloquized Rosselin.

The Hussar Captain tossed aside his gnawed bone.

"They are behind the double row of young birches in the drive," said the musician. "Good, Guillard!"

The Corporal had replied to the shot, and a German ran into the open with upraised arms, spun round, and collapsed. His dark figure, piteously still, made a sad blot on the white snow.

"How many were there?" asked the French Count, finishing his hasty supper.

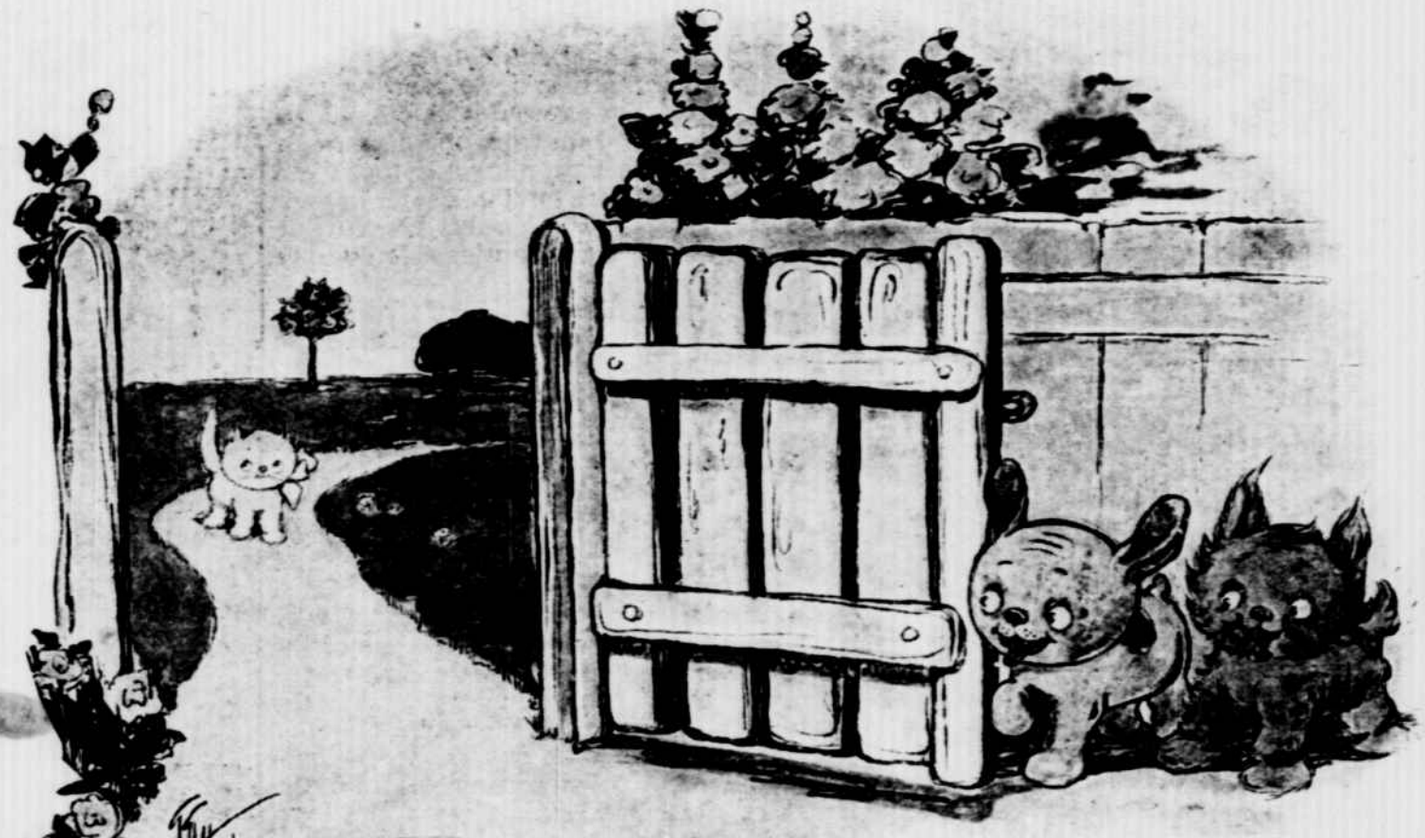
"There were thirteen," laughed Varache. "Now there are twelve; exactly two to one, which is more satisfactory. They are in no hurry to show—"

A bullet shivered the window and went through the back of the musician's left hand. He uttered a dreadful hiccup.

"Stand well back!" cried Baudemont, taking the chassepot from Varache. "*Hélas!* Here they come, though!"

The Prussians were charging down the avenue. Two dropped as the chassepots at the window spat at them. The rest gained cover again and fired at the window. Guillard kneeled, resting the barrel of his weapon on the sill. Once more his aim found a Prussian's life; but before he could dodge away a bullet struck the barrel of his gun and ricocheting passed through Rosselin's throat. The artist dropped with a gasp

WAITING FOR KITTY AT THE GARDEN GATE



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of death whistling shrilly through his windpipe.

"He will paint no more pictures," said Varache. "*Mon Dieu!* how I suffer!" and he breathed upon his shattered hand.

"Steady! Here they come again," cried Baudemont.

The enemy was making a final dash for the château. Guillard found a third victim; then the Corporal sank back with a profound sigh, as if by that sound he expressed gladness that for him the war was over and that his eternal sleep was come.

"Take that—and that—and that!" snarled the French Count as he leaned right out of the window and emptied his revolver into the troopers, who were smashing down a door with the butt ends of their carbines.

"Be careful, my Captain; we cannot spare you yet," pleaded Compardin, dragging the Hussar back; for the balls were whining all around his head.

"I have settled two, at any rate," grunted Baudemont, reloading. His hands were shaking like leaves; but all the same he was perfectly calm.

"Call in de Cheret, won't you?" advised the musician, taking up the Corporal's rifle and making a terrible grimace at the pain it caused him.

"Go, Compardin," ordered the Captain, "and be quick about it!"

Compardin ran from the room, which opened upon a picture gallery from which a great stairway wound down to a square hall. The hall reverberated to the smashing blows that the Germans were delivering upon the main door.

"We shall not see Compardin any more," said Varache.

"You are wrong; for here they come," answered the Count. "By the fiends! it is time!"

AS the author, Marette, and Compardin rushed up the stairs, the battered door gave way, and eight Prussians, all that were left, tumbled one over the other in their hurry to get to close quarters.

"Now avenge your master!" cried Varache, as he pressed the trigger of the Corporal's chassepot. The foremost trooper tottered back; but his command sent a revolver bullet between the musician's eyes. Varache fell forward, sprawling on the stairs.

"Wait! Wait!" howled the Hussar Captain. "A little closer yet, my braves, until they are round the bend of the staircase! Now!"

The defenders sent their last volley into the charging Prussians, It was a terrible discharge; for three men dropped at it. Then Marette, shot through the body, leaped over the balustrade in his agony.

"Three to their four! We shall win!" cried the French Count, showing his teeth, his mustache bristling with fury.

De Cheret stopped to pick up Marette's chassepot. A ball passed the length of his backbone, and he pitched forward, turning a somersault on the stairs.

The four remaining Germans rushed up, howling as if they were mad. Compardin sent a bayonet through one, leaped at the throat of the second. Von Eyrick passed his saber through the vinegrower's body; but Compardin's fingers, closed deep in his enemy's windpipe, tightened in his death struggle. A wave of darkness swept over the German's senses. He pitched down the stairs and lay very still at the foot, with those choking fingers still buried in his throat.

"A long adieu, *bon amil*" cried Baudemont, who found himself alone with two enemies.

"From that is no recovery!" shouted the German Count, and, thrusting his revolver almost in the other's face, he pressed the trigger.

The revolver missed fire. At the same moment the Hussar cut down the other Prussian with a terrible blow from his saber. Exhausted by the effort, the steel dropped from his fingers. Then he folded his arms and smiled as he felt the commandant's sword touching his carotid artery.

It was a wonderful smile, which lighted up his face as a shaft of dying sunset shoots from under a stormcloud.

"Surrender, if you would live!" cried von Eyrick, moved in spite of himself.

"I am coming, my children!" said the Hussar Captain. He snatched savagely at the saber's blade; but it sank into his throat.

"Fool! Brave fool!" muttered the German as the Count tottered and dropped at his feet.

Baudemont felt the cold mist of dissolution rising in his heart. His clutching fingers touched the commandant's revolver, which the Prussian had flung aside in anger. It had missed fire once. Would it do so again? The Hussar lifted it, aimed wildly, and pressed the trigger.

"Come to me once—just once—if it be possible—before you take your eternal departure!"

Von Eyrick, shot through the brain, fell like a log. The ball which had passed through his head struck the chandelier in the open room behind him, was deflected, and splintered its way through the back of the piano. A discordant wail came from the wires, a protesting sob of sound which rang through the silence, through the sudden, terrible quiet, slowly fading in that after-calm of spent passion—the dying chord of a bizarre nocturne; fainter and fainter—fainter and fainter. . . .

CHEATING UNCLE SAM

MANY efforts are made to cheat Uncle Sam through the redemption division of the Treasury Department, which division has to do with redeeming partly destroyed Government currency.

Once a man in a Western State sent in half of a ten-dollar bill, accompanied by an affidavit to the effect that while on a spree he had used the other half to light a cigar. The half he forwarded was nicely charred along the inner edge, and the story would have been accepted by treasury officials had it not been that within twenty-four hours there was received from a bank in the same State the other half of the note.

The theory of treasury officials was that while more or less intoxicated the man had struggled for possession of the bill with some one who had wrested half of it from him; that the despoiler had turned the half into the bank and received five dollars for it; that the intoxicated man, recovering his senses, had found the other half in his pocket, and, not wishing to lose his money, had conceived the plan of singeing the edge of the note and claiming that the other half had been destroyed. So he committed perjury in an attempt to rob the Government of five dollars.

A man in Cleveland sent an affidavit to the Treasury Department, accompanying the singed half of two twenty-dollar bills and one ten-dollar bill. This affidavit was typewritten and in perfect form. It set forth that the deponent was a commercial traveler; that after returning from a journey he had been cleaning out his traveling bag, when, inadvertently, he had thrown into the fire an envelop containing fifty dollars in bills; that, in accordance with section so and so, he would like to have the money restored to him, etc.

The clerk who brought this document to the officials commented on its lucidity and completeness; but to one of these the story seemed unnatural, and he ordered that the claim be held up for awhile.

Twenty-four hours later a big shipment of mutilated currency came from a subtreasury in the West. The official who had ordered the claim held up asked whether there were any half-notes in this shipment. In four or five minutes a clerk brought him the missing halves of the bills the Cleveland man had sent in.

The attempt to defraud was plain. The matter was at once put into the hands of the Secret Service Division, and a man was sent West to investigate. The man who had made the affidavit confessed at once. He had cut the bills in halves, and for one-half of them obtained twenty-five dollars. The other half he singed and attached to his affidavit. The gross profit of the swindle could not have been more than twenty-five dollars, and for that trifling sum the man forfeited his liberty for a year and a half.

THE WISE OSTRICH

THE stock illustration of what a fool will do is the habit ostriches have of sticking the head into the sand, leaving the body exposed; but we are assured by those who know that this habit does not seem foolish to one who studies the ostrich in its desert home. On the contrary, it is asserted, it is Nature's wise provision for the safety of the bird in a region where hiding places are not common.

The male ostrich hatches the eggs, looks after the brood, keeps his eyes open for men, beasts, and birds, and sounds a loud, snorting, warning call when he sees an enemy. The brood, when warned, fade out of sight. Each chick squats motionless, its head in the sand, and its body so near in color to that of the sand and scant herbage as to deceive even an experienced hunter.

Its body looks like a gray desert bush, and the hunters, when searching for young ostriches, examine every bush within many rods of the spot where a brood disappears. Often what seemed a bush is found to be in part or wholly a young ostrich.

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